Report on Meeting with UN Under-secretary-general Rafeeudin Achmed on August 8, 1990 at 10:00AM in Mr. Achmed's office.

(The appointment was sought by a fax from Japan explaining that Ms. Takemura Yasuko of the Upper House Foreign Affairs Comm. was anxious to clarify the nature of the Secretary-general's letter to Suharto that was reported in the Jakarta Post of July 26, 1990 and to exchange views. Jose Ramos-Horta had suggested this action to Ms Takemura when he met her in Tokyo in early August.)

Since I acted as interpretor for Ms Takemura, I was unable to take notes. There were two other people present, a woman with a pad and pencil and a man who observed and listened. I do not remember their names.

Ms. Takemura expressed appreciation to Mr Achmed for answering the letters sent from 70 Diet members to de Cuellar several years ago. She recalled the comment in his letter that the secretary-general, like the Diet members, was concerned that the East Timorese be included in the negotiations.

Ms Takemura explained the nature of the Diet Forum, and said that the concern for East Timor sprang from a sincere reflection on Japan's past aggression in East Timor, and the desire to help in the present situation where Indonesia is committing the same kind of aggression, two hundred thousand East Timorese having lost their lives and instances of arbitrary arrest and torture continuing.

Ahmed mentioned the fact that the pope had visited E.T. last year and said that he hoped the E.T. issue would be solved by the realization of the Portuguese parliamentarian's mission to E.T. He talked about this in an optimistic tone.

Ms. Takemura raised the issue of the de Cuellar letter to Suharto. (We showed Mr. Achmed the copy of the Jakarta Post article.) Mr. Achmed said that the letter to Suharto was in order to encourage Indonesia to realize the carrying out of the Portuguese parliamentarians mission to East Timor. At the same time a similar letter had been conveyed to President Suarez of Portugal. The Jakarta Post article was a strictly Indonesian interpretation, but could be said to be correct insofar as, if the parliamentarians mission took place, this would lead to the solution of the issue and therefore the removal of the issue from the UN.

Mr. Achmed consistently expressed the hope that the mission would pave the way for a settlement.

Mr. Achmed gave a long explanation about the differing views at the UN regarding self determination for former colonial territories. While in Africa, he said, the trend is to support the maintaining of the colonial borders, in Asia it is not. He said the trend among Asian countries is to seek the unification of territories that were seperated by colonialism. For example, China, Macau and Hong Kong are being reunited now, and no one objects. The same for Malaysia; this is seen as the unifying of areas that were formerly one, but were divided by colonial conquest. He said the same was true of Indonesia.

Ms. Takemura asked if the Secretary general had received and answered the February 1989 letter from Bishop Belo urging the UN to conduct a referendum in East Timor. Mr Achmed avoided the question. She asked again; had the Secretary General received a letter from Bishop Belo. Mr Achmed answered that the Secretary General had received no letter from East Timor; he had received a letter from "an undividual" outside of East Timor. Ms Takemura asked: Did the secretary general respond to the letter? Mr. Achmed said that "the individual" was informed that the letter had been received. Mr.

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We concluded the meeting and I took a couple of pictures of Ms. Takemura and Mr. Achmed standing in front of a picture that he got from Japan. Upon leaving the room, I called Ms. Takemura's attention to the wall-size map of the world in Mr. Achmed's office, pointing out that there was no mark separating East from West Timor. The man who had been silent up to then pointed to the fact that the map was a U.S. Defense Department map, "the U.N maps have a line," he said. Mr. Achmed saw us out to the door and gave Ms. Takemura a UN poster-chart on the status of women around the world.

Comments by Joan. In retrospect, we probably should have responded to Mr. Achmed's explanation about the "trend" in Asia toward reunification by citing the appropriate UN principle guaranteeing the people the right to determine their own fate. We should have mentioned this same point as a comment on the parliamentarian mission as well (while sharing the UN hopes for the mission, stressing that the UN mandate can only be achieved when the people themselves are consulted.) We should certainly have dwelt on this at length in response to Mr Achmed's non-response to mention of Bishop Belo's letter. We might also have asked Mr. Ached what he thought Japan could do.